



2025 Football Memo – Week 10

October 22, 2025

Legal Equipment

Thank you coaches and officials for being vigilant on promoting the legal use of player equipment during the 2025 season. Please review the following points of emphasis with your respective teams and crews to ensure that the standards for legal equipment as drafted by the NFHS are met as we enter the playoff season.

1. **Mouth Pieces** – free of any attachments not serving a protective purpose
2. **Eye Black** – must be a single solid stroke not to extend beyond eye orbit or below cheekbone
3. **Face Shields** – must be clear; or if tinted, must have a doctor's note and SDHSAA approval
4. **Knees Pads** – legal pads must be worn over the knee and completely covered by pants
5. **Extra Clothing** – No sweatpants, attempt to match colors of undergarments and jersey

Sideline Management

Sideline management starts during the pre-game meeting with the crew coming prepared to discuss the game, the teams involved, and the crew members involved. As a crew, you are being judged the moment you step on the field for the pre-game coach conference and field inspection. The following tips can help create a positive outcome:

- **Be a Professional** – Walk the field, check the players, talk with the people you are responsible for. Maintain communication as needed by position.
- **Be a Good Manager** – Wings own your sideline, Umpires own the LOS in the middle, Referee and Back Judge assist the wings on plays going out of bounds and be consistent on Pace of Play.
- **Be a Customer Service Agent** – Listening skills are key. Understand the situations. Show empathy. Remember as an official you need to control the chaos, create calm, and provide hope.

2025 Game Management - Controlling Sideline

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn3iymdMUi8> - 45 minutes

Spiking the Football to Stop the Clock

NFHS Rule 7.5.2B allows the passer to take a direct snap in a standing position (under center, pistol, or shotgun formation) to immediately spike the ball to the ground to stop the clock. If the passer does not release the ball immediately after controlling the snap or muffs the snap and the ball touches the ground, it is an illegal forward pass foul. If the passer kneels touching the ground with their knee prior to the spike, the play is ruled dead, and the clock will continue to run.



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Snapper Protection and Center Gaps on PAT's and FG's

NFHS rules protect the snapper in a scrimmage kick formation by prohibiting a defensive player from charging directly into the snapper. Protection applies only if the ball is snapped from a scrimmage kick formation (shotgun formations are highly unlikely to be scrimmage kick formations and snappers are not protected). The protection exists until the snapper can protect himself, moves to block or otherwise participate in the play. "Protect himself" means the snapper has time to look up and regain his balance. If contacted directly while his head is still down and before he has been given a chance to look up, the contact is a foul resulting in a 15-yard penalty "Roughing the snapper". If the contact is slight and indirect, like Team R "shooting" through the gaps of either side of the snapper, it is not a foul. Contact with the snapper's hands or arms before the ball is released is also illegal, likely a dead ball foul resulting in a 5-yard encroachment penalty.

Trick Plays

In some of the biggest football games of the year, often a trick play can be the difference between winning and losing. Many types of these trick plays are perfectly legal – the halfback pass, the hook and ladder, or the double pass with the first pass being backward behind the line of scrimmage and the second pass going forward. There are several types of trick plays, however, that are prohibited by NFHS rule.

Coaches – When asked by officials in the pregame conference if you have any special plays you might run, you must have this discussion with them. Officials review these trick plays to validate legality and to inform the crew to be prepared. These plays must be executed perfectly so as not to have a false start by simulating a snap or an illegal motion or shift. If they are not run completely legal, they will be shut down by the officials.

Victory Formation

Officials pinch in and encourage players to execute it safely and without unnecessary contact. There are guidelines to prevent misunderstandings, such as penalizing a team for a faked knee. A "take a knee" play is usually signaled by the coach to the officials, who then communicate this to the opposing team, and the offensive players form a protective semi-circle around the quarterback as he takes the snap and then kneels to continue running the clock. Officials shut the play down if Team A does any action other than "take a knee".



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Mercy Rule Guidelines

SDHSAA (Mercy Rule) 35/50 Point Rule Clarification		
	11A, 11B and 9-Man	11AA and 11AAA
35-point lead in 2 nd half	Clock will continue to run except for timeouts (team or official) or after a score.	Clock will continue to run except for timeouts (team or official) or after a score.
50-point lead in 2 nd half	If a team secures a 50-point or greater lead at the end of the first half, or if they secure such a lead during the second half, the game ends immediately.	No 50-point rule
Clock Stoppage Only For	- Charged team time outs - After a score - Intermission between 3rd and 4th quarter - Extended injury timeout – only if coach is required - Any officials time out for safety reasons	- Charged team time outs - After a score - Intermission between 3rd and 4th quarter - Extended injury timeout – only if coach is required - Any officials time out for safety reasons
Change of Possession	Clock continues to run	Clock continues to run
Penalty Enforcements	Clock continues to run unless there is a significant delay and stopped by an officials time out	Clock continues to run unless there is a significant delay and stopped by an officials time out
Game Termination State Championship	NFHS Rules further allow for coaches and officials to decide to shorten any period or terminate the game early in accord with rule 3-1-3. Only the 35-point running clock rule shall be in effect for State Championship contests (50-point rule will not take effect in a State Final contest).	NFHS Rules further allow for coaches and officials to decide to shorten any period or terminate the game early in accord with rule 3-1-3. Only the 35-point running clock rule shall be in effect for State Championship contests (50-point rule will not take effect in a State Final contest).

Forward Fumbles Out Of Bounds – (Rule 3-4-3, 4-3-1)

A situation potentially giving an unfair advantage to a fumbling team was revised. When a forward fumble goes **out of bounds** or is ruled out of bounds **between the goal lines**, the ball shall be returned to the spot of the fumble.

The spot for any forward fumble **in-bounds** that occurs between the goal lines is the spot of **recovery** by either the offense or defense.



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Week 10 Crew Chief Zoom Meeting from Tuesday 10/21/25

A Zoom Crew Chief session was held on Tuesday 10/21/25. We reviewed selected plays that covered legally throwing the ball away OOB, having patient whistles, players lying on top of other players after a block, contact on the snapper, and illegal shifts. Please consult with your crew chief about the plays and incorporate them into your pregame preparation. The plays that were discussed can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2uQm8lOZdPvmaiupNBGK5xAJr_ufq0yl

Sports Officials Alliance Foundation

The Sports Officials Alliance Foundation was established in the fall of 2024 by Micheal Perrion and Patrick Snyder to act in recruiting, retaining, and recognizing officials. They secured sponsorships to provide polo shirts to the 2024 Football Championship crews. They are planning to provide shirts for the football championship officials again this year. They are also trying to secure the organization for a gathering of football officials at the Dakota Dome this year, bringing together officials from across the state during the finals weekend. Another one of their goals is to provide scholarships for newer officials to offset some of the costs of attending high school level camps and clinics. As officials, we have a role in promoting our avocation and supporting efforts to include more people and keep them involved. We all know how hard it is to find replacements when needed. It will only get worse if we do not do something about it. The plan is to build enough momentum with football by doing this so that this can expand to other sports.

Let us recognize those who have already contributed to our efforts:

Platinum Sponsor: Chris Hipple - Leavitt Recreation & Hospitality Insurance -

<https://www.leavitt.com/lrh/>

Bronze Sponsor: Sioux Falls Golf - <https://www.siouxfallsgolf.com/>

Bronze Sponsor: RefShop: <https://www.refshop.us>

Individuals have contributed as well and wish to remain anonymous.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the board members if you have any questions or if you would like to contribute.

Thank you!

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2025 Football Memo – Week 10

Illegal Shift Mechanics

If a player on the offensive team moves to a new position after the ready and before the snap, it is a shift **(2-39)**. There might be several shifts between the ready and the snap (breaking the huddle **(2-21)** is a shift), but no matter how many there are, after the last shift all members of the offensive team must stop and remain still for at least **one second** - **Rule (7-2-6)**.

When there is an illegal shift during a regular play from scrimmage, a flag should be thrown at the snap, and the play should continue. This is a live-ball foul simultaneous with the snap. An example of this type of play can be found here: <https://youtu.be/9ZEQ49odoPM>. On this play, the receiver is getting to their initial position as the ball is snapped. This play should not have been shut down in this instance.

Remember, MIBT = Make it be there

For suggestions, feedback, and comments, please feel free to contact.		
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